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CASE CV0276a

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I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to the: Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

John M. Kilcoyne

Type or print name

Signature

February 9, 2004

Date

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF

Art Unit: 1632

Stewart A. Cederholm-Williams

Examiner: S.L. Chen

APPLICATION NO: 09/334,325

FILED: June 16, 1999

FOR: Fibrin Sealant as a Transfection/Transformation Vehicle for Gene Therapy

Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Sir:

Enclosed herewith are three copies of the Appeal Brief in the above-identified application.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-3869 in the name of Bristol-Myers Squibb Company in the amount of \$330 for payment of the appeal fee. An additional copy of this paper is here enclosed. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Account No. 02-3869 in the name of Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.

Enclosed is a Petition for Extension of Time.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Kilcoyne

John M. Kilcoyne
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 33,100

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Patent Department
100 Headquarters Park Drive
Skillman, NJ 08558
(908) 904-2372
Date: February 9, 2004



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APPEAL BRIEF

Sir:

This is an appeal from the Final Rejection of claims 1 and 13-17 in this application.

This Brief is submitted in triplicate as required, and is accompanied by the requisite fee of \$330.00. Please charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 02-3869. No additional fee is believed to be necessary. However, if this fee is incorrect, or if any additional fee is required, please charge any fees due, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No.02-3869.

(1) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in this appeal is Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, a Delaware corporation, having a place of business at 345 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10154. Bristol-Myers Squibb Company is the assignee and owner of the entire interest in the above-identified application by virtue of an assignment which was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office on August 23, 1999, at Reel/Frame 010191/0657.

(2) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

The undersigned knows of no other appeals or interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 and 13-16 are pending in this application.

Claims 1 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, 1st paragraph, as allegedly lacking enablement.

No claims are allowed.

Appendix A annexed hereto contains a copy of the claims involved in the appeal. The appealed claims are claims 1 and 13-16.

(4) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

Appellant appeals the decision dated September 8, 2003, of the Primary Examiner finally rejecting claims 1 and 13-17. An Amendment After Final Rejection was filed on November 5, 2003, canceling claim 17 without prejudice. This amendment was entered. Accordingly, claims 1 and 13-16 remain in this application.

(5) SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of transforming a cell comprising, in order, the steps of applying a transformation effective amount of a nucleic acid to the cell; adhering a pliable, adhesive fibrin gel to the cell so as to entrap a transformation effective amount of the nucleic acid in the fibrin gel adhered to the cell; and transforming the cell with the nucleic acid.

(6) ISSUES

The sole issue on appeal is whether claims 1 and 13-16 were properly rejected under 35 USC §112, 1st paragraph.

(7) GROUPING OF CLAIMS

Appellant submits that each of the rejected claims is separately patentable. However, for purposes of this appeal, appellant understands that the claims will stand or fall together.

(8) ARGUMENTS

I. Claims 1 and 13-16 were not properly rejected under 35 USC §112, 1st paragraph

Claims 1 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, 1st paragraph, as allegedly lacking enablement. Appellant requests that the rejection be reversed.

The rejection essentially asserts that “[t]he claims read on gene therapy *in vivo*”, and since gene therapy was unpredictable at the time of the invention, the claims lack enablement. However, the claims are not directed to gene therapy *per se*. Rather, the claims are directed to transforming a cell. There is nothing in the rejection to say that *transforming a cell* is unpredictable. In fact, the previous rejection asserted that “progress has been made” in many respects. Accordingly, it is submitted that this rejection is not directed to the claims as written and should therefore be withdrawn.

Moreover, although the issue presented in the rejection is whether the applicant has enabled the invention, the basis of the rejection is an assertion that the application fails to demonstrate that the invention works. Thus, the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection is simply a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 in the guise of a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

The Office asserts that the rejection is for lack of enablement under U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, and is distinct from a rejection under U.S.C. § 101 asserting inoperability. Specifically, the Office asserts that

the specification, while being enabling for a method of transforming a cell *in vivo* as taught by Donovan et al., 1998 (U.S. Patent No. 5,833,651), does not reasonably provide enablement for a method of transforming a cell *in vivo* by applying a nucleic acid and a pliable, adhesive fibrin gel to said cell with apparatus other than stent or balloon catheter. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims and is repeated for the reasons set forth in the preceding Official

Action mailed 3-12-03 (Paper No. 22). Applicant's arguments filed 6-16-03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Next, it is asserted in the rejection that "the specification fails to provide adequate guidance and evidence for how to administer a pliable, adhesive fibrin gel either mixed with a nucleic acid or separate from a nucleic acid to a subject such that target cells in said subject are transformed with said nucleic acid."

Further, it is asserted that "[T]he specification also fails to provide adequate guidance what apparatus is used to deliver the pliable, adhesive fibrin gel to target cells in a subject for transformation of said cells where the pliable, adhesive fibrin gel will polymerize quickly. There is no evidence of record that shows transformation of target cells in a subject with any nucleic acid via administering the pliable, adhesive fibrin gel and the nucleic acid in a mixture or administering said fibrin gel and nucleic acid in a sequential order."

That the nature of the rejection focuses on the text presented above in added **bold** is clear from the text presented above in added underline. That is, the text in added underline acknowledges that the description of how to make the transforming composition is indeed in the application, that transforming nucleic acids are well-known, and indeed that transforming a cell *in vivo* is enabled when done with certain equipment. Implicit in this acknowledgement is that those of ordinary skill who have undertaken many transformations know how to measure for such transformation and have been enabled if they use a stent or balloon catheter. Yet, what is emphasized in **bold** is the Office's assertion regarding the specification's teachings relative to how the nucleic acid entrapped in fibrin gel can be taken up by cells.

Because the subject rejection is for want of utility, it is incumbent on the Office to present sufficient reason to doubt applicant's assertion of utility. One way to seek to conform to the legal requirements for such a rejection would be to follow the Office's own internal guidelines--the Utility Examination Guidelines. While the burden on the Office to justify an assertion of want of a credible utility would appear more relaxed in the guidelines than in the precedent of the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, even this low hurdle was not met in the subject rejection.

The Office's Utility Examination Guidelines require:

Any rejection based on lack of utility should include a detailed explanation why the claimed invention has no specific and substantial credible utility. Whenever possible, the Examiner should provide documentary evidence (e.g., scientific or technical journals, excerpts from treatises or books, or U.S. or foreign patents) to support the factual basis for the *prima facie* showing of no specific and substantial credible utility. If documentary

evidence is not available, the Examiner should specifically explain the scientific basis for his or her factual conclusions.

(Guidelines at §B.3.). Appellant submits that the rejection does not specifically explain a scientific basis to doubt the asserted utility. To the contrary, in making the subject rejection, the Office turns the burden, which the Office's own rules specifically places on itself, onto the appellant, requiring proofs, even though the rejection admits that transforming a cell *in vivo* is enabled when done with a stent or balloon catheter. For instance, the Office essentially asks the appellant to explain how the nucleic acid entrapped in fibrin gel can be taken up by cells. Appellant respectfully notes that even the most skilled in the art can offer no more than informed speculation on the mechanism of transformation. Such is not a requirement of the patent law. That is, the patent law does not require an applicant to understand the theory of operation for his or her invention. Moreover, there is no requirement that an applicant show every possible way there is to perform his invention.

Apparently implicit in the Office's assertion is a belief that the nature of a fibrin gel would somehow disable transformation. That *belief* is not shared by appellant. Moreover, the Office's guidelines require that the Office explain any reasoning behind this belief so that the applicant (here, appellant) has a real opportunity to respond.

Further, according to the Guidelines, the Office's showing must contain the following:

- (1) An explanation that clearly sets forth the reasoning used in concluding that the asserted specific and substantial utility is not credible;
- (2) Support for factual findings relied upon in reaching this conclusion; and
- (3) An evaluation of all relevant evidence of record, including utilities taught in the closest prior art.

(Guidelines at §B.3.(b).). In other words, the Office must tell the applicant (appellant), in factually supported detail, why it believes that entrapping nucleic acid in fibrin will interfere with the transformation process. The Office's showing must, moreover, establish not that the Examiner believes that fibrin polymer interferes, but that "it is more likely than not that a person skilled in the art would not consider credible any specific and substantial utility asserted by the applicant for the claimed invention." Guidelines at §B.3.(b).

Accordingly, the subject rejection does not meet even the minimal requirements of the Utility Guidelines.

The Court of Appeals for the federal Circuit has reiterated that:

[A] specification disclosure which contains a teaching of the manner and process of making and using the invention in terms which correspond in scope to those used in describing and defining the subject matter sought to be patented *must* be taken as in compliance with the enabling requirement

of Section 112 unless there is reason to doubt the objective truth of the statements contained therein which must be relied on for enabling support.

Brana, at 1565, 34 USPQ2d at 1441 (quoting Marzocchi, at 223, 169 USQ at 369). It is:

Only after the PTO provides evidence showing that one of ordinary skill in the art would reasonably doubt the asserted utility does the burden shift to the applicant to provide rebuttal evidence sufficient to convince such a person of the invention's asserted utility.

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Thus, the Office must accept the appellant's assertion of the usefulness of the invention *unless* it provides evidence showing that one of ordinary skill in the art would reasonably doubt the asserted utility, not mere speculation that an invention might not work.

For all these reasons, appellant believes that this rejection should be reversed.

II. Conclusion

For the reasons set forth herein, it is urged that the rejection of claims 1 and 13-16 should be reversed. Allowance of this application with claims 1 and 13-16 is in order. Such action is earnestly solicited.

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John M. Kilcoyne
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APPENDIX

1. A method of transforming a cell comprising, in order, the steps of:
applying a transformation effective amount of a nucleic acid to the cell;
adhering a pliable, adhesive fibrin gel to the cell so as to entrap a transformation effective amount of the nucleic acid in the fibrin gel adhered to the cell; and
transforming the cell with the nucleic acid.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is a plasmid.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is incorporated in a virus.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the pliable, adhesive fibrin gel is formed by mixing a fibrin monomer composition with a polymerizing agent preparation effective to convert the fibrin monomer preparation into a fibrin gel, and adhered by contacting the cell with the mixture while the mixture is pliable and adhesive.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein the fibrin monomer composition comprises acid-solubilized fibrin, and the polymerizing agent comprises an amount of base effective to sufficiently neutralize the mixture to allow the fibrin to polymerize.



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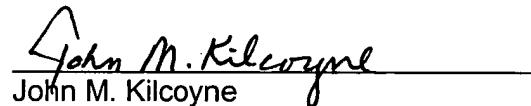
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